

[0064] Layer B arranged on a lower side in FIG. 7 includes, in a downward direction, a third transparent resistive film 16, a fourth transparent resistive film 17, a glass substrate 18, and second dot spacers 19.

[0065] Preferably, as shown in FIG. 7, the first dot spacers 15 are higher density than the second dot spacers 19, for example, 2 times or more. However, the present invention contains the state of the density of the spacers 19 are equal or less than that of the spacers 15 as obtaining an effect of the present invention.

[0066] The first transparent film 11 forms a surface of the touch panel input device 100 and includes a plastic resin film of, for example, polyethylene terephthalate (PET) as in the prior art examples. The film 11 is flexible to easily bend in response to pressure of a finger of the user.

[0067] The first transparent resistive film 12 is a transparent conductive film of, for example, ITO or SnO_2 . The film 52 is arranged entirely on a lower surface of the first transparent film 11 and has nearly a uniform thickness. When the film 11 is pressed, the film 12 is distorted together with the film 11.

[0068] The second transparent resistive film 13 includes, like the film 12, a transparent conductive film of same materials. The film 12 is disposed entirely on an upper surface of the second transparent film 14.

[0069] The second transparent film 54 is disposed as a bottom section of layer A, entirely on the film 14, the second transparent resistive film 13 is formed with nearly a uniform thickness.

[0070] The first dot spacers 15 are arranged with (nearly) an equal interval therebetween on the second transparent resistive film 13 on the second transparent film 14. The spacers 15 prevent contact between the transparent resistive films 12 and 13 in a non-input state.

[0071] The third transparent resistive film 16 is, like the first and second transparent resistive films 12 and 13, a transparent conductive film made of same materials. The film 16 is arranged entirely on a lower surface of the second transparent film 14 and has a uniform thickness.

[0072] The fourth transparent resistive film 17 includes, like the first to third transparent resistive films 12, 13, and 16, a transparent conductive film made of same materials. The film 17 is disposed entirely on an upper surface of the glass substrate 18, which will be described below.

[0073] The glass substrate 18 is a glass substrate and/or a hard materials, for example, (a) hard plastics forming a bottom section of the touch panel 100. Disposed entirely on the glass substrate 18 is the fourth transparent resistive film 17 with nearly a uniform thickness.

[0074] The second dot spacers 19 are disposed with an equal interval therebetween on the fourth transparent resistive film 13 on the glass substrate 18. The spacers 19 prevent contact between the transparent resistive films 16 and 17 in a non-input state.

[0075] According to the interval of the dot spacers 15 and 19, strength of pressure (of depression) of a pen or a fingertip can be adjusted.

[0076] The touch panel input device 100 as the embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 7 includes two layers, i.e., layers A and B as described above. Layer A can be regarded as a first touch panel for finger input including a film, not a glass substrate, as its bottom. It can be considered that layer B is a second touch panel for pen input including a glass substrate as its bottom.

[0077] FIG. 8 shows in a block diagram an outline of structure of the touch panel input device 100 configured as the first embodiment in accordance with the present invention. The device 100 of FIG. 8 includes a touch panel 21, a touch panel controller 22, a controller 23, and a display section 24.

[0078] The touch panel 21 is a transparent touch panel constructed as shown in FIG. 7. The panel 21 is placed onto the display section 24, which will be described later. Resultantly, information displayed on the display section 24 is visually checked via the touch panel 21 by the user.

[0079] The touch panel controller 22 supervises layers A and B of the 2-layer touch panel 21 in which layers A and B are independently controlled. For example, the controller 22 senses a coordinate position depressed by a pen or a finger (tip).

[0080] The controller 23 supervises operations of the touch panel input device and includes a central processing unit (CPU) and a memory, not shown. The controller 23 reads from the memory a control program to supervise overall operation of the touch panel input device and executes the program by the CPU to achieve the control operation. Additionally, the controller 23 also conducts display control. That is, the controller 23 is connected to the display section 24 to change contents displayed on the display section 24 according to input coordinate data sensed by the touch panel controller 22.

[0081] The display section 24 is a display unit to display various information items in response to control indication from the controller 23 and includes, for example, a liquid crystal display (LCD). The display section 24 in the embodiment may display a selection screen selected by the user and/or a screen containing information of notification for the user.

[0082] FIG. 9 shows an outline of constitution of the touch panel controller in the touch panel input device as the first embodiment of the present invention. The configuration of FIG. 9 includes a touch panel controller 22 connected to the first touch panel 21a including the first and second transparent resistive films corresponding to layer A shown in FIG. 7. The touch panel controller 22 includes analog switches 31 and 32, A/D converters 33 and 34, and analog switches 35 and 26.

[0083] Connected further to the touch panel controller 22 is the second touch panel 21b including the third and fourth transparent resistive films associated with layer B of FIG. 7. The controller 22 additionally includes analog switches 41 and 42, A/D converters 43 and 44, and analog switches 45 and 46.

[0084] Under supervision of the controller 23 shown in FIG. 8, the touch panel controller 22 can control operation of peripheral circuits of the touch panel 100 independently for the first touch panel 21a of layer A and the second touch panel 21b of layer B.